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UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

Radio Service

OFFICE OF
INFORMATION

★ CC. 5 1930 ★

U. S. Department of Agriculture

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Housekeepers' Chat

Wednesday, October 22, 1930.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "Should Children Be Paid for Home Duties?" Approved by Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

Bulletin available: "Infant Care". (Publication of the Children's Bureau, U. S. Dept. of Labor.)

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Before we begin today's program, let's take a look at the calendar for November. Do you know what important event takes place in November, 1930? Thanksgiving day dinner, of course. Well, that's one important event, but not the one I have in mind. Please don't believe that I spend all my time thinking about food.

No, the important event I have in mind is the White House Conference on Child Health and Protection. To all who are interested in children, this conference may stand as "the most dramatic single effort ever made in the United States," to gather information about the care of children, and to make recommendations about how to improve our present methods of child care.

Never before in the history of the United States has the child been considered such an important person. Do you know how many child welfare experts are working on reports for this Conference? Eleven hundred. For more than a year, they have been gathering facts about the health of the 43 million children in the United States. Next month, during the week of November 19 to November 22, they will present their reports, in Washington, D. C.

I wish that all of us who are interested in child care could listen-in on these reports. Since that is impossible, we can at least read the reports, in the newspapers and magazines. Perhaps I will be fortunate enough to attend some of the meetings. If so, I'll take pencil and paper along, and try to record some of the most interesting items, for you. Perhaps I can get, for my radio audience, some of the human interest stories which do not reach the newspapers.

The Conference has been organized into four major sections: (1) medical services for children; (2) public health administration; (3) education and training; (4) the handicapped child. The work of the Conference should mean healthier, happier children, who will make healthier, happier citizens.

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Now, the principal item on the program today is a letter from a mother in Ohio. Her letter is thought-provoking. I am taking the liberty to read you the entire letter, just as she has written it to me:

"Dear Aunt Sammy: I enjoy your helpful talks over the radio so much, and I know you can help me with this problem -- one that has been very difficult for me to solve. In our Parent-Teachers meeting today, it was decided that each member, and each child, earn some money of his own, each month. That brings up my old problem. For a long time, I allowed my children, a boy of seven and a girl of ten, to do certain chores, for which they were paid at the end of the week. That money was their own; they felt they had worked for it, and earned it.

"But I do think that every child should have certain duties in the home, which he performs for the love of doing them, or for some other reason besides making money. Life will be incomplete for my children, if they do not learn to do things about the home, and I feel that I will be cheating them if I do not teach them how to work and be independent, even at the cost of my nerves and strength..

"In our household, I must have some help. But if the children were willing, and had an incentive to do it cheerfully, they could do what I would otherwise pay some one else to do. Should I pay the children? They are wise to modern ways, and have told me: 'I'll do that if you'll pay me.' I like the idea of a certain allowance, and some definitely outlined work, but I do not like to see work and money so closely related in the child's mind, as it has been in our case. How can I reach the desired end?"

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That's all of the letter. What do you say about it? Should this mother pay her children for helping with the housework? For drying the dishes, making their beds, dusting the living room? Or should they be expected to do these things as a matter of course.

I should like to hear from some of you who are confronted by the same problem. Do you give your children a definite weekly allowance, or are they paid a definite amount for a definite piece of work? Have you discussed this problem in your own Parent-Teacher meetings? Let's air our views -- and there's no better way to air our views than by radio.

Before we write the menu, here's a question to be answered: "Please give me a list of the garments which should be included in a baby's layette."

The answer to this question is in the book, "Infant Care," published by the Children's Bureau of the U. S. Department of Labor. Send me your name and address, and I'll see that the book is mailed to you. "Infant Care" is a book no modern mother can afford to be without. It includes chapters on clothes for babies, food for babies, how to furnish the nursery, how to keep the baby well -- all those important phases of "Bringing Up Junior."

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Now let's write the supper menu. I know Junior will like this: Scalloped Vegetables; Graham Muffins; Cocoa; and Baked Bananas. I'd like that myself, wouldn't you?

For the Scalloped Vegetables, use any kinds of vegetables you had left over from lunch -- peas, carrots, beans, for instance. Mix the left-over vegetables with white sauce, put them in a shallow baking dish, cover with buttered crumbs, and bake in the oven.

There's a recipe for Baked Bananas in the Radio Cookbook, on page 13, "Baked Bananas with Lemon Sauce." You need only five ingredients:

6 ripe bananas.	2 tablespoons lemon juice, and
1/3 cup sugar.	1/8 teaspoon salt.
2 tablespoons melted butter.	

Five ingredients, for Baked Bananas with Lemon Sauce: (Repeat)

Skin the bananas. Scrape them lightly, to remove the stringy portion. Split in half, lengthwise. Then place the bananas in a greased shallow baking dish, and pour over them the liquid mixture. Bake in a moderate oven, until brown. Serve from the dish.

By the way, have you ever served bananas broiled with bacon? Neither have I, but my Next-Door Neighbor says she ate such a dish, in South America. We'll have to try it some time.

Our supper menu, again: Scalloped Vegetables; Graham Muffins, Cocoa, Baked Bananas.

Tomorrow we'll try to catch up with some of the questions which are piling up in the question box.

Thursday: "Prepare for Winter."

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